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REMARKS

Applicants have carefully considered the Office Action dated January 11, 2007 and the references cited therein. Applicants present this Amendment in a sincere effort to place the application in condition for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

In this Amendment, new claims 13-19 have been added; therefore, claims 1-19 are presented for consideration.

In the Office Action, the examiner has objected to the Abstract for containing an informality. Accordingly, the Abstract has been amended in order to address the examiner's objection. In addition, applicants have noted a typographical informality in two paragraphs of the specification and have amended them accordingly.

Claims 1-7, and 9-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,169,338 to Stoll ("Stoll") in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,711,507 to Koshinaka et al. ("Koshinaka"). Stoll has been cited for teaching a pneumatic arrangement including a plurality of servicing modules for the preparation of compressed air arranged on a common bus system and a control module connected to the bus system for monitoring functions for the servicing modules. The examiner concedes that Stoll does not teach implementation of a plurality of valves of a valve arrangement wherein the plurality of valves are not positioned within, and do not form part of, the plurality of servicing modules. Accordingly, Koshinaka has been cited for its alleged teaching a pneumatic arrangement and a plurality of valves arranged between servicing modules (meters, and shut off valves,) and actuators or devices which are not within or part of the air driven actuators or devices. The examiner contends that it would have been obvious to modify Stoll to include the valve arrangement, such as the type as found in Koshinaka, in order to monitor and control the

operative states of the servicing modules to determine the leakage of compressed air in the system.

Applicants would like to take the opportunity to thank the Examiners Wallis and Deberadinis for the courtesies extended to Applicants' attorney during the telephonic interview conducted on March 19, 2007. During the interview, the cited art and the rejection of claims 1, 2 and 12 were discussed. Applicants' representative indicated that the combination fails to disclose the invention set forth in claim 1 since there was no teaching to include an air servicing module, control module and plurality of valves forming a valve arrangement together to constitute a subassembly. The possibility of amending the claims to further define the invention was also discussed.

Applicants have amended claim 1 and respectfully submit that claim 1, as amended, patentably distinguishes over the art of record. As amended, Claim 1 defines the invention such that the control module, the servicing modules, and the valve arrangement are physically mounted to the common bus system thereby forming a unitary structure constituting a subassembly. Accordingly, the various elements are physically located together on a common bus system to form a unitary structure which makes for ease of assembly and servicing since all the elements are together. The cited combination of prior art references fails to disclose this feature.

Stoll is directed to a compressed air servicing unit including a plurality of air servicing modules including, for example, pressure controllers, filters, soft set module and oilers. There is no teaching of a pneumatic arrangement including a plurality of valves connected to the common bus system wherein the valves are separate and apart from the air servicing units. There is also no teaching to mount a valve arrangement including a plurality of valves with servicing modules in a manner where they are physically mounted together on a common bus system to form a unitary structure which constitutes a subassembly. In Stoll, only the compressed air servicing unit modules are mounted together.

Koshinaka also fails to teach or suggest connecting a plurality of valves to air servicing modules wherein they form a unitary structure constituting a subassembly. In Koshinaka, the valves 250-253 are operatively connected to actuators 31-33 as shown in the schematic of Figure 1. The valves are also operatively connected to a control panel 5. There is no teaching or suggestion that these valves or any of the elements are physically mounted to a common bus system to form a unitary structure. Figure 1 is simply a schematic diagram of a pneumatic circuit and provides no teaching as to the mounting arrangement of the various circuit elements.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that the cited combination of references fails to teach or suggest every limitation of the claim. Therefore, claim 1, and those claims depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Applicants also respectfully submit that there is no motivation for combining Stoll and Koshinaka as suggested in the Office Action. The Office Action states that it would have been obvious “to modify Stoll to include the a valve arrangement, such as the type as seen in Koshinaka in order to monitor and control the operative states of the servicing modules and/or to determine the leakage of compressed air in the system.” In Koshinaka, the valves 251-253 of the valve arrangement control actuators 31-33. An valve 250 is a main valve. These valves do not monitor and control operative states of the servicing modules or determine leakage. For that function, Koshinaka uses a flow meter 4 and a monitor computer 6. Col. 2, lines 21-22. There is no teaching that the valves would assist in monitoring serving modules or determine leakage when combined with Stoll. Accordingly, one skilled in the art would not combine the references as suggested in the Office Action. Therefore, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1, and those claims depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over the cited references.

Applicants note that claim 2 further defines that the servicing modules are arranged in a row on the common bus system. This claim further distinguishes over the prior art which

fails to disclose a servicing modules, a control module, and valves of a valve arrangement, which are separate from the air servicing modules, arranged in a row on a common bus system.

Dependent claim 3 defines the bus system as being designed to form a bus connector bar which preferably comprises individual bar elements able to be plugged or attached together. The servicing and control modules and the valve arrangement are able to be arranged in a row with the bus conductor bar. None of the references teach or suggest the valves being part of a bus system which is formed of individual bar elements which can be plugged or attached together. Accordingly, claim 3 further distinguishes the invention over the prior art of record.

Applicants have added new claims 14-17 that depend from claim 1. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of these new claims.

With regard to independent claim 12, applicants have amended the claim in order to further define that the plurality of servicing modules, control module and the valve arrangement are physically secured together on the common bus system in a juxtaposed manner. The claim further recites that the plurality of valves are not positioned within and do not form part of the plurality of servicing modules.

Both Stoll and Koshinaka fail to teach or suggest a valve arrangement arranged together with the air servicing units and control module on a common bus system. The cited art further fails to teach or suggest that such elements are arranged in juxtaposed manner. Applicants further submit that there is no motivation to combine Stoll and Koshinaka as set forth above with respect to claim 1. Accordingly, applicants respectfully submit that claim 12, and new claim 13 which depends therefrom, define over the references of record.

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Applicants have further added new independent claim 18 directed to a pneumatic arrangement including a plurality of servicing modules including an air filter and a pressure regulator for the filtering and regulating of compressed air. The plurality of servicing modules are mounted on a common bus system. A valve arrangement including a plurality of valves is mounted on the common bus system. The plurality of valves are not positioned within, and do not form part of, the plurality of servicing modules. A control module is mounted on the common bus system and operatively connected to the servicing modules and the valve arrangement, the control module controlling and/or monitoring the plurality of servicing modules and the plurality of valves.

Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art of record does not teach or suggest the use of a single control module for controlling air servicing modules including an air filter and pressure regulator and for controlling valves of a valve arrangement which are separate from the servicing modules.

In the Office Action, the examiner has relied on Koshinaka for teaching a control and monitoring of the air servicing modules and valves. The air servicing modules have been found by the examiner to include a flow meter 4 and main valve 250. Neither of these devices are an air filter or a pressure regulator for filtering or regulating compressed air. In Koshinaka, the valve and flow meter are used to determining leakage in an air circuit. They are not for filtering or regulating the air.

In the present invention defined in claim 18, the servicing modules include an air filter and pressure regulator for filtering and regulating the compressed air. A single control module controls and/or monitors such filter and pressure regulator as well as controls and/or monitors the valves of the valve arrangement. By using only a single control module for compressed air preparation and valve control/monitoring, the present invention provides a compact efficient design. Since the prior art fails to teach or suggest using a control module

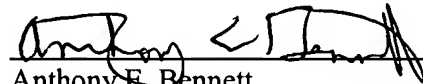
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as claimed, applicants respectfully submit that claim 18, and new claim 19 depending therefrom, patentably distinguish over the references of record.

In view of the amendments and remarks set forth above, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of claims 1-12, consideration of new claims 13-19, and allowance of the application with claims 1-19.

If the examiner believes that a telephone interview would be helpful in moving this case towards allowance, he is respectfully invited to contact applicants' attorney at the number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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